

**GUIDE TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM  
IN GEOGRAPHY  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY**

2021-2022

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| I. INTRODUCTION.....  | 2  |
| II. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES.....              | 2  |
| III. FUNDING.....   | 3  |
| IV. GRADUATE ASSISTANTS (TAs and RAs).....                    | 6  |
| V. ADVISORY SYSTEM.....                                       | 8  |
| VI. M.A. PROGRAM.....   | 10 |
| A. M.A. Requirements.....                                     | 10 |
| B. Thesis Option.....   | 11 |
| C. Two Paper Option.....                                      | 11 |
| D. Thesis Defense.....  | 11 |
| E. Continuity of Study.....                                   | 12 |
| F. Minimum Basic Requirements for Satisfactory Progress.....  | 12 |
| G. Internal Applications/Admissions to the Ph.D. Program..... | 12 |
| VII. Ph.D. PROGRAM.....                                       | 14 |
| A. Course Requirements.....                                   | 14 |
| B. Advancing to Candidacy.....                                | 15 |
| C. Dissertation Proposal.....                                 | 15 |
| D. Ph.D. Qualifying Exams.....                                | 16 |
| E. Ph.D. Dissertation.....                                    | 17 |
| F. Dissertation Defense.....                                  | 17 |
| G. Continuity of Study.....                                   | 18 |
| H. Minimum Basic Requirements for Satisfactory Progress.....  | 18 |
| VIII. WRITING AND SCHEDULING.....                             | 19 |
| IX. GRADUATE CERTIFICATES IN ADVANCED STUDIES.....            | 20 |
| X. DEPARTMENTAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES.....                  | 21 |
| Appendix I: Travel Guidelines.....                            | 22 |
| Appendix II: Future Professoriate Program.....                | 22 |
| Appendix III: Academic Integrity and Disability Policies..... | 23 |

**Updated: December 2021**

## I INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to introduce new graduate students to the basic educational and administrative structures of the Geography Department. It is not designed to answer every question a new student may have, but it should be helpful during the period of initial orientation to Geography at Syracuse and thereafter as a basic reference to our program. **It is recommended that you retain this guide for future reference.**

The Geography Department is part of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs; the department's administrative office, several faculty offices, and the James Library are located on the first floor of Eggers Hall. The Maxwell School is essentially the Social Science division of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School, but is more or less autonomous, having its own Dean and administrative officers. In addition to Geography, it includes History, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Economics, Public Administration, International Relations and various interdisciplinary programs and research centers.

The department makes every effort to foster a close and open working relationship between faculty and students. We feel that this is the key to a successful, supportive, stimulating, and enjoyable intellectual environment. Maintaining such an environment requires the cooperation and participation of all members of the department. It is expected, therefore, that students will take part in activities outside of formal classes and seminars. There are many opportunities: the geography colloquium series, visiting speakers, symposia and other activities within the department, in the Maxwell School and elsewhere at the University. Participation in these events benefits both individual graduate students and the departmental community as a whole. In particular, graduate students are expected to attend the Departmental Colloquia (normally held on Friday afternoons and followed by a reception).

Faculty members and many of the graduate students are members of the American Association of Geographers (AAG), which offers special membership rates for students. We strongly urge you to join. There are many benefits, including access to publications of the AAG and website, which contains the useful Jobs in Geography listings. Syracuse is in the Middle States Division of the AAG. A Divisional Meeting is held every October, and national meetings are held annually either in March or April. Students are encouraged to attend and to offer papers at both meetings, as appropriate. The department offers grants to support graduate students who are on the program at scholarly meetings; the amount varies annually according to budgetary constraints.

## II ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES

The Geography Department is governed by the Faculty. The Faculty consists of professors of varying ranks – Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor – who hold regular appointments.

The Faculty has a Chair, elected by the faculty to a pre-determined term of office and appointed by the Dean of the Maxwell School. The Chair presides over day to day administration of the department and represents it to the Maxwell School, the College of Arts and Sciences, and other appropriate university units and officials. Faculty responsibilities center on matters related to personnel, over which it has final jurisdiction. In addition, the faculty sets and oversees the curriculum and the scheduling of classes. Most decisions are made by the entire regularly appointed faculty. The exceptions are the Tenure and Promotions Committees, which are restricted on the basis of rank and tenure. Consensus is sought in decision-making but, if a vote is required, a simple majority prevails.

The Faculty makes decisions at departmental meetings held monthly during the academic year. Graduate students elect two representatives to the departmental meetings who share one full vote between them. Graduate student representatives attend all parts of the meeting except those dealing with graduate student or faculty personnel matters. Likewise, graduate student representatives vote on all issues except those related to graduate student and faculty personnel issues (such as promotion and tenure decisions).

In addition to departmental meetings, departmental decisions are made by four standing committees: The Chair's Advisory Committee; the Graduate Committee (which also serves as the Graduate Admissions and Awards Committee); the Undergraduate Committee; and the Colloquium Committee.

Graduate Director—A faculty member appointed by the departmental Chair serves as the Director of Graduate Studies of the department. Duties of the position include:

- Chairing the Graduate Committee
- Acting as liaison between graduate students and faculty
- Representing the department to other university committees and officials in relation to graduate affairs
- Recruiting new graduate students
- Making graduate personnel assignments in consultation with the Chair and faculty
- Maintaining the currency of graduate student files

Students should feel free to speak with their advisors, the Graduate Director, and the Department Chair about any matter of concern.

### III FUNDING

Funding decisions (including Fellowship, Graduate Assistantship and other financial awards such as the Watson Fellowship) are made each spring by the Graduate Committee for the following academic year. For some of these awards, the dates for application and notification are set by the Graduate School. The allocation of awards is a complex process involving a number of considerations, the main points of which follow.

There are never sufficient awards available to support all students admitted to the graduate program. Awards are allocated on the basis of academic merit, which may be measured by overall academic performance, or as needed, according to the specific technical abilities required to fill a given position.

Students must be in residence to be considered for funding as a Teaching Assistant (TA). TA'ing involves working directly with students and coordinating with an instructor and in most cases at least one other TA. Grading must be done promptly and TA's must be responsive to issues that arise with their students. As a result, non-resident students will not be considered for teaching assistantships. Students with TA assignments must go through the university's TA training program and are strongly encouraged to participate in the department's Future Professoriate Program (FPP).

Non-resident students *may* be considered for funding as a research assistant, but only with explicit agreement of the supervising faculty member.

To be considered in good standing, a student must: 1) have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better, 2) not have two or more Incompletes over two semesters, 3) have performed adequately in their Teaching Assistant or other Graduate Assistant assignments, and 4) not have earned a grade C in any degree coursework. Failure to meet any of these criteria shall constitute grounds for denial of funding. Such decisions are made on a case by case basis, and consideration is given to extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, family emergency, or other personal problems). Students whose funding has been discontinued for reasons of performance may request reconsideration.

**According to University policy, students who take a formal university-approved leave of absence must apply for readmission.** According to department policy: 1) any student in good standing who takes such a leave and reapplies within two years or less, will normally be prioritized for funding over new student admissions; 2) any student in good standing who takes such a leave and reapplies after two years, will not be prioritized for admission and funding over new student admissions; 3) any student who leaves the program by failing to register for “zero credits thesis/dissertation” for more than a semester must petition the faculty regarding their funding eligibility; such a petition will not be prioritized over new student admissions when awarding financial aid.

The departmental Graduate Committee consists of the Graduate Director, at least two other faculty members and (if one is willing and available) one graduate student. The Graduate Committee is responsible for admissions and funding. Funding decisions are made in consultation with relevant faculty members.

Students holding Assistantships are expected to work an average of 20 hours per week.

The department expects all students to seek grants and fellowships from sources outside the University, especially for dissertation research. The Graduate School and the Maxwell School maintain lists of potential support and a Fellowship File is also maintained in the department office.

Students seeking part-time employment should determine if they qualify for the federal “Work Study Program” through the Financial Aid Office of the University.

Summer funding: Graduate students can apply each year for several summer funding opportunities that are available through the department, including the Roscoe-Martin fund and funding through the regional centers in the Moynihan Institute. These are competitive, merit-based awards. The Geography Department usually has summer funding awards available to students who have cycled off their regular funding packages. Departmental summer funding awards are subject to funding availability and are awarded to students who have cycled off funding only after funds have been allocated to students still on departmental funding. Priority for Departmental summer funding awards is given to students in residence who have recently cycled off departmental funding, and other students conducting research. Lower priority is given to out-of-residence students.

M.A. students are normally guaranteed one summer of research funding, which can be used at the student’s discretion, to offset costs associated with thesis research. M.A. students continuing directly into the Ph.D. program may be eligible for funding during the summer prior to entering the Ph.D. program (i.e. the summer between the M.A. and Ph.D.) *if* the funding is to be used for preliminary doctoral research or finishing a manuscript for publication, based on the M.A. thesis or papers. Students wishing to receive this funding must apply to the Graduate Committee and must obtain a letter of support from their advisor affirming the student’s plans. Students must successfully defend their M.A. thesis or M.A. papers prior to (or very shortly after) Spring Commencement in order to be eligible for this funding. Under no circumstances should this funding be used to support thesis writing.

Ph.D. students who completed the M.A. in our department are eligible for two summers of

research funding after they have begun the Ph.D. program (this does not count whatever funding they may receive during the summer between the M.A. and Ph.D. programs). Ph.D. students with Master's degrees from other programs are eligible for three summers of research funding after they have entered the Ph.D. program.

Summer Teaching—The department often seeks instructors for one or two geography courses that are offered through University College during the summer sessions. Salaries for graduate student instructors are set by University College and vary depending on qualifications. Preference is normally given to faculty and doctoral students although qualified master's students are encouraged to apply. All appointments are made by the Department Chair, in consultation with the Geography faculty.

Roscoe-Martin Award— This Maxwell School-wide award is intended to help defray the costs of activities that advance the student's research agenda, or can be used to help defray the costs of a professional development experience, such as language training or a relevant workshop. Awards competitions are held in the Fall semester each year.

David E. Sopher Memorial Scholarships—This scholarship memorializes our deceased colleague, Professor David E. Sopher, a friend, mentor and colleague to many of the faculty and numerous Syracuse graduate alumni. The scholarship carries a stipend and is for the support of a graduate student's research. Students in good academic standing and with research interests either in South Asia or cultural-social geography regardless of regional focus are eligible. Preference is normally given to doctoral students. Sopher Scholarships are awarded in the Fall; there may be one or two per year, depending on available resources.

Shin-Yi Hsu Research Award— This research award is generously provided by SU Geography alumnus, Dr. Shin-Yi Hsu to support research in Taiwan. Secondary consideration is given to students from Japan, Korea, and India.

Watson Fellowship— This award provides full tuition coverage and stipend to students from Latin America or the Caribbean area, or students conducting research on Latin America or the Caribbean.

#### IV GRADUATE ASSISTANTS (TAs and RAs)

The department seeks to prepare graduate students to be skilled teachers and researchers. For many graduate students, much of this preparation occurs while serving as a graduate assistant—either as a Teaching Assistant (TA) or a Research Assistant (RA). TAs serve a primary function of providing support for faculty undergraduate teaching while RAs serve a primary function of supporting faculty research. While the role of the TA/RA is to alleviate some of the workload of their faculty supervisor, it should be recognized that this is also a professional and academic learning experience for TAs /RAs to develop skills of their own.

Students and professors are asked prior to the start of each semester to submit assignment preferences to the Graduate Director. Every effort is made to honor these preferences—balancing both faculty and student requests, although it is seldom possible to accommodate everyone's first choice. Changes in course offerings and enrollments means that some changes in TA assignments must be made between semesters. Research Assistant (RAs) interests, skills, and plans for future development are also considered in assignments.

Though the requirements and expectations will differ for each TA or RA assignment, it is assumed that a relationship of mutual respect and collective effort will be maintained. Though difficult to dictate, an attempt should be made to keep a positive rapport between supervisor and assistant. This includes keeping communication lines open on both ends.

Students holding assistantships work are expected to work an average of 20 hours per week during the period of their appointment. (The 20-hour average pertains to the payroll schedule. The exact dates that the pay period begins and ends each academic year will be indicated in each TA/ RA contract letter.) For the Department of Geography, workloads should not exceed 20 hours a week *on average* over the course of the semester work period, although the exact number of hours worked will vary from week to week depending on class or research schedules.

In some instances, TAs/ RAs may be asked by their supervisor to work when classes are not in session. In these cases, the assistant and supervisor should negotiate the work schedule in advance. The semester work period begins two-and-one-half workdays before the start of classes. Normally, for RAs the work period ends two-and-one-half workdays after the last day of classes. However, this may be negotiated with the supervisor, depending on the Assistant's academic and personal schedule. For TAs the end of the semester work period will vary depending on personal and final exam schedules, and should be negotiated well in advance between supervisor and the assistant. Both the Assistant and supervisor should anticipate the fluctuations of workload and needed time-off, and plan accordingly. Supervisors should allow for flexibility of winter and summer vacation, travel, and research plans. The TA/ RA must inform their supervisor ahead of time if requesting additional time-off.

Assistants are strongly encouraged to maintain a work log that details the hours they work each week. Any work done for the appointment (including meetings, photocopying, and e-mail correspondence) is considered part of the average 20 hours per week. This work log should be presented to the supervisor periodically to ensure mutual agreement of time expenditures. Future Professoriate Program (FPP) commitments do not contribute to the 20 hours per week, but the required TA training conducted by the University prior to a teaching position *is* included. (If an RA attends TA training, anticipating that s/he may become a TA in a subsequent semester, then this time is included in his/her total semester hours. In this case, the RA's supervisor should be notified by the RA prior to the training.) These stipulations do not include summer recess employment. If a student is employed over the summer recess, specifications should be made at the time of the appointment between TA/RA and supervisor.

Syracuse University recognizes certain official school holidays when the office is closed, and TAs/RAs are not required to work. These include: Labor Day, Thanksgiving week, the week between Christmas Day and New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, (Memorial Day and Independence Day if a summer employee.)

TA work may include grading, preparing and leading discussion sections, conducting review sessions, photocopying, recording grades and attendance, and other tasks related to the assigned course. In each instance, the responsibilities of both the TA/RA and supervisor should be clearly delineated at the onset of their working relationship. This will allow for any issues of conflicting expectations to be resolved before problems arise. Unless other arrangements are made, TAs are expected to attend class lectures. Regular meetings between the TAs/RAs and their supervisors are strongly encouraged in order to facilitate good communication. TAs are required to hold at least two regular office hours weekly.

The following steps should be taken if at any time a conflict arises between a TA/RA and their faculty supervisor that cannot be resolved between those parties in an informal way.

- a. The Graduate Director and Department Chair should be notified and serve as mediator(s) in subsequent meetings between both parties. The Graduate Director and Chair may also consult the graduate committee and chair's advisory committee, *but should only do so with the approval of the parties involved.*
- b. If the dispute cannot be resolved within the Department, parties should seek mediation at the level of the Maxwell Dean's Office, and then at the level of the University Senate's Committee for Academic Freedom, Tenure, Promotion and Ethics (AFTPE).

In each instance, the responsibilities of the TA/RA and the supervisor should be clearly delineated at the onset of the working relationship, preferably in writing. At the conclusion of each semester, TAs/RAs are evaluated by their supervisors, who will write an assessment of their performance. This should be considered a tool for professional development, and should be discussed and signed by both supervisor and assistant. Copies of this assessment will be made available to the Assistant, and will be placed in the students' permanent file. Students have the right to rebut negative evaluations in writing. In rare instances, a negative evaluation may result in a decision not to continue aid to a student. In such cases, the student involved has the right to (and is encouraged to) request a meeting with the Graduate Committee and the supervising faculty member to discuss and reevaluate the negative decision.

## V ADVISORY SYSTEM

The Graduate Director assigns a provisional advisor to each new student. This assignment will be made before classes begin in August. The initial advising assignments are considered temporary, and may be changed at the request of the student. Students must have an advisory committee, and by the beginning of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year have a permanent principal advisor. If no faculty member is willing to serve as a principal advisor, then the student must take a leave of absence until a regular faculty member agrees to serve as the student's advisor. If a principal advisor is not secured within 2 years of the beginning of the leave of absence, then the student is required to withdraw from the program.

Students may wish to change advisors at a later stage in her/his program because of such factors as new or modified academic interests, personality conflicts, extended absence of the advisor from the campus, etc. Any student contemplating a change should consult with the Graduate Director and/or Department Chairperson early in the process, and the parties involved should inform the Graduate Director once the change is made. This change is recorded on the committee form in the student's file. Students must secure a new advisor within six months of expressing a wish to change advisors. If no faculty member is willing to serve as a principal advisor within six months, then the student must take a leave of absence from the program until a regular geography faculty member agrees to serve as the student's advisor. If a permanent, principal advisor is not secured within 2 years of the beginning of the leave of absence, then the student must withdraw from the program.

Every student will have a core advisory committee that minimally consists of:

- a. For the M.A. - the advisor and one other geography faculty member.
- b. For the Ph.D. - the advisor and two other geography faculty members. Students may petition the graduate director and chair to include one Affiliated Faculty (i.e. Syracuse University faculty members listed on the Geography Department website as affiliated with the department, but housed in a department other than Geography) as one of the three members of the advisory committee overseeing the proposal and qualifying exam stages. Please note, doing this option still requires students have three core Geography faculty at the dissertation defense stage.

The core advisory committee for M.A. students forms the core of the M.A. thesis defense committee (which requires a total of four members; see below).

The core advisory committee for Ph.D. students administers the qualifying examination. It also forms the core of the dissertation defense committee (which requires a total of six members; see below).

The Annual Review Meeting: All MA students and PhD students who have not yet advanced to candidacy are required to meet with their advisor and committee members for an annual review meeting. The purpose of the annual review meeting is to discuss the student's progress in the program, plans for thesis/dissertation, exams or other requirements, funding issues, performance as a teaching/research assistant, concerns related to the program and department, or other matters. First year students should meet with their committee toward the end of the Spring semester (once they have completed most of their first year but before they begin their summer research). Returning students should meet with their committees early in the Fall semester (following summer research and as they prepare for the upcoming academic year). *It is the responsibility of the student to schedule the annual review meeting each year.*

Before the Annual Review, the student completes an Annual Review form (an electronic version is also available on the department website) and distributes it to the Advisory Committee. After the meeting, the Advisor prepares a draft report and distributes it to the student. Once the



student and advisor agree on final wording, the advisor and the student sign the report. The advisor distributes copies to all committee members and places a copy of the report, along with the annual review form, in the student's file.

Annual Review meetings are required of all M.A. students and all Ph.D. students prior to advancing to candidacy. Non-resident M.A. pre-ABD Ph.D. are still required to hold annual update meetings, but may arrange with their advisors and committee members how best to conduct the meeting (e.g. via Skype, conference call or email).

Ph.D. students who are ABD are not required to hold formal annual update meetings, but are encouraged to provide annual progress reports to their advisor and committee members. A formal meeting may be requested by the student or the advisor, if desired. A brief written summary of interactions with the student, and prospects for degree completion in a timely manner, should be placed by the advisor in the student's file.

If deemed appropriate by the student, advisor and committee, the Annual Update meeting may be combined with other meetings between the student and her or his committee (such as a proposal defense or the oral portion of the qualifying exams).

## VI. M.A. PROGRAM

The Standard M.A. Program consists of 30 hours of approved graduate credit. The Graduate School requires that at least half of the 30 hours be at the 600 level or above.

The M.A. Program requires exposure to the breadth of geography as studied by faculty in the department. Such exposure must include work in the areas of environment-society geography, human geography and physical geography. This exposure is referred to as “breadth requirements.” Minimum exposure would be equivalent to basic survey courses in those subjects at Syracuse. A student who does not already have this exposure should discuss this issue with his/her advisory committee and the graduate director and decide upon a suitable plan for acquiring it. Suitable plans can include attending undergraduate courses, auditing, or directed reading. A copy of this plan should be placed in the student’s file and the advisor is responsible for ensuring its completion.

To ensure a solid, broad-based geographic training at the graduate level, the Geography Department requires that the student take no more than a total of two Independent Studies (690) and Readings and Special Work in Geography (609). Further, a student must take Geography courses from four or more different Geography faculty, as part of their 30 hours of course work.

### A. M.A. Requirements

Several coursework requirements apply to the standard 30-hour M.A. Program:

- *GEO 602 (Research Design in Geography)*
- *GEO 603 (Geographic Thought)*
- EITHER
  - Option A:
    - Two Seminars (numbered 700 or above, see exceptions below) from different Geography faculty
    - One spatial methods/techniques course (see approved list below).

OR

- Option B:
  - One Seminar (numbered 700 or above, see exceptions below) from Geography faculty.
  - Two spatial methods/techniques courses (see approved list below). For this option only, GEO 605 Writing Geography can also be included as one of the two “spatial methods/techniques” courses.
- 30 hours of graduate credit (including option A or B above), with at least 15 of those hours numbered 600 or above. May include up to 6 hours of *GEO 997 (Thesis)*
- No more than 2 independent studies (Geo 609 or 690); Geography courses from at least 4 Geography faculty
- No more than 48 hours of graduate credit while M.A. student
- Spatial methods/techniques courses include GEO 610 (Qualitative Methods); GEO 676 Advanced GIS, GEO 681 (Map Design); GEO 682 (Environmental Remote Sensing); GEO 683 (Geographic Information Systems); GEO 684 (GIS for Urban Environments); GEO 685 Community Geography; GEO 686 (Advanced Quantitative Geographic Analysis); GEO 687 (Environmental Geostatistics). Other courses may be approved for methods credit but require approval from the Graduate Director, the course instructor and the student’s advisor.

To count a course not on this list for the methods requirement, students must submit a petition to the faculty form.

- Geography Seminars under 700-level that can count for Options A and B above: GEO 573 (Geography of Capital), GEO 606: Development and Sustainability, GEO 622 Water: Environment, Society, and Politics.

Students may meet the requirements of the M.A. Program by selecting one of two thesis options: monograph or two papers. This selection must be made prior to the end of the student's second semester in the M.A. Program. Both options require an oral examination. When scheduling the oral exam, the student should provide committee members with a copy of the Program of Study, approved and signed by the Graduate Director

### **B. M.A. Thesis by Monograph**

The Master's thesis monograph is written on a topic approved by and under the supervision of the student's advisory committee. The standard thesis carries six credit hours and it is expected that it will be completed and defended by the end of the second year in residence. A thesis should be limited enough in its scope and length so that it can be completed within a two-year M.A. program.

A monograph may range in type from one that presents a critical review of the literature of a subfield, to others that carry out field or laboratory research. A monograph may make an original contribution to knowledge, but it is not required to do so. Rather, the assessment of the M.A. thesis is typically based upon the adequacy and definition of the research problem; the design of the research strategy; the skills demonstrated in collection, analysis and interpretation of data; the currency of understanding of the supporting literature, and finally the argument, logic and skill in writing and illustrating the thesis.

Theses must be defended in a formal defense (**see below**). Once finalized, the thesis will be bound and a copy placed in the James Library and a final electronic copy must be uploaded into the system run by the graduate school.

### **C. M.A. Thesis by Two Papers**

As an alternative to the M.A. monograph option, students may write two Master's papers. Students should decide whether to write a monograph or two papers by the end of the student's first year in the MA program (preferably at or before the first annual update meeting). The topics of the two papers should be developed by the student in consultation with her or his advisor and committee members.

Students may take up to 6 thesis credit hours toward completion of the papers. Students must defend the papers in a formal defense (for details, see "Oral Examination," below).

The Master's papers should be viewed as manuscripts in the style and form of peer-reviewed journal article. The students must write papers in the style of particular journals, with the aim of eventually submitting the papers for publication. There is an additional departmental form students and their advisers must complete to indicate which journals the papers were written for. Master's papers should be of higher quality than the usual seminar paper or term report, and should incorporate an up-to-date understanding of the supporting literature and (if appropriate) discussion of relevant research methods. Additionally, students should write a brief introductory paper that ties the two papers together and provides an overview of the student's research approach.

Once approved, two signed copies of the Master's papers and introductory essay should be placed in the student's departmental file. The papers will be bound and placed in the James Library and

a final electronic copy must be uploaded into the system run by the graduate school.

#### **D. Thesis Defense**

Completed and advisor-approved theses (including two-paper option) must be submitted to the examination committee at least two weeks before the oral exam.

The oral exam will usually focus on the thesis or papers, but may also address currency of knowledge. The defense will normally last no more than two hours. The examining committee consists of the advisor and two other faculty members, at least one of whom must be from the Geography department. A fourth non-geography, S.U. faculty member serves as chair of the examination and reports the results to the Graduate School.

At the end of the oral examination the examining committee votes on whether to recommend that the student be awarded the M.A. The decision is transmitted by the chair of the examining committee to the Graduate School. General rules governing graduate exams are available from the Graduate School.

At the time of their thesis oral examination, each student completing the M.A. thesis option is also considered for the honor of graduating “with distinction.” Distinction is reserved for students who demonstrate *superior* performances in both the oral examination and the written thesis. It requires a unanimous favorable vote from all members of the student’s examining committee.

#### **E. Continuity of Study**

According to University policy, all requirements for the master’s degree must be completed within a period of seven years from the date the student registers for the first course in the program. If the degree is not obtained within this seven-year period, a student may petition the department and the Graduate School for reinstatement of credit in an outdated course, stating the rationale for maintaining currency of knowledge. The department further requires that all students pursuing the M.A. demonstrate currency of knowledge in their final written work and oral examination, whether they are earning their degree via the Thesis or Two-Paper option.

#### **F. Minimum Basic Requirements for Satisfactory Progress**

For continued matriculation and consideration for departmental funding, M.A. students must: 1) have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better; 2) not have two or more Incompletes over two semesters; 3) have performed adequately in their Teaching Assistant or other Graduate Assistant assignments; 4) not have earned a grade of C or lower in degree coursework; and 5) have a principal advisor by the beginning of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the program. If no faculty member is willing to serve as a principal advisor by the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, or within a period of 6 months after the student leaves a previous advisor, then the student must take a leave of absence until such time as a regular faculty member in the department agrees to advise (see above). Failure to meet any of these criteria shall constitute grounds for denial of funding. Such decisions are made on a case by case basis, and consideration is given to extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness or other personal matters). Students whose funding has been discontinued for reasons of performance may request reconsideration.

#### **G. Internal Application/Admission to the Ph.D. Program**

MA Students wishing to continue into the PhD program must submit a “Graduate School Internal Admission Application” to the department’s Graduate Admissions Committee by the Department’s due-date for applications to the graduate program (usually in early January – check with the Director of Graduate Studies for the exact date). The application must be accompanied by: a) a personal statement that provides a clear discussion of the student’s research interests and

goals for doctoral study; and b) letters of support from the intended doctoral advisor and from one other member of the geography faculty.

The Graduate Admissions and Awards Committee will consider all internal admission applications in January and February when it reviews external admission applications. The Graduate Admissions and Awards Committee will inform the student and his/her advisor about admission. Any decision that the Committee makes regarding an internal admission is provisional until the M.A. degree has been conferred by the University.

Internal applicants will be considered competitively alongside external applicants. While internal applicants have the advantage of being known to the faculty, there is no guarantee that they will be accepted into or offered funding for the PhD program. Students are therefore encouraged to apply to other PhD programs in addition to our own.

## VII Ph.D. PROGRAM

The Ph.D. degree requires a minimum of 72 credit hours of approved graduate work in geography and related fields. The 72 credit hours may include up to 30 credit hours accepted from the Master's degree. Doctoral students must obtain a minimum of 60 credit hours of approved course work and a minimum of 12 dissertation credit hours (GEO 999). Students with an approved Master's degree from another university must take at least 30 credit hours of course work in residence at Syracuse (not including the dissertation), including at least 20 credit hours of work at the 600 level or above. No more than 30 credit hours from a completed Master's degree at another institution may be counted toward the 60 for the Ph.D. *N.B.: This is not automatic – the student must take responsibility to prepare a petition to the Graduate School to have the credits counted toward his/her program of study.*

Students who completed an M.A. in this department may count up to 6 thesis credits toward the 60 credits of required course work. At least two-thirds of the required course work (not including the dissertation) must be at the 600 level or above. PhD students who completed Option A/B for their MA in the department must do the same for the Phd, but do not need to re-take GEO 602 or GEO 603.

- **Course Requirements**

It is expected that students who enter the Ph.D. program with a Master's degree from another university will have, or will acquire, qualifications equivalent to those normally achieved by a Syracuse M.A. in geography (in particular, note that the "breadth requirements" described under MA requirements, above, apply to PhD students as well).

Specific course requirements, in addition to the dissertation hours mentioned above, include:

- *GEO 602 (Research Design in Geography)*
- *GEO 603 (Geographic Thought, formerly GEO 805)*
- EITHER
  - Option A
    - Two Seminars (numbered 700 or above) from different Geography faculty, and
    - One spatial methods/techniques course (see approved list below)
  - OR
  - Option B
    - One Seminar (numbered 700 or above) from Geography faculty, and
    - Two spatial methods/techniques courses (see approved list below). For this option only, GEO 605 Writing Geography can also be included as one of the two "methods" courses.
- Spatial methods/techniques courses: GEO 610 (Qualitative Methods); GEO 676 Advanced GIS; GEO 681 (Map Design); GEO 682 (Environmental Remote Sensing); GEO 683 (Geographic Information Systems); GEO 684 (GIS for Urban Environments); GEO 685 (Community Geography); GEO 686 (Advanced Quantitative Geographic Analysis); GEO 687 (Environmental Geostatistics); GEO 688 (Geographic Information and Society). Other geography classes may count toward the methods requirement, but must be approved by the Graduate Director, the course instructor and the student's advisor. To count a course not on this list, students must submit a petition to the faculty form.
- Geography Seminars under 700-level that can count for Options A and B above: GEO 573

(Geography of Capital), GEO 606: Development and Sustainability, GEO 622 Water: Environment, Society, and Politics

- No more than 2 independent studies or directed readings (Geo 690 or 609; total of 4 if M.A. completed at SU); Geography courses from at least 4 Geography faculty.

In consultation with their advisor, Ph.D. students are encouraged to take appropriate courses outside the Geography Department. These courses need not be in any single field but should relate to and strengthen the student's studies within geography. Doctoral students who propose to undertake research in a non-English speaking area are expected to possess ability in relevant language(s) sufficient to carry out the proposed research. Students are therefore encouraged to pursue formal language training at SU or through another venue.

### **B. Advancing to Candidacy ('ABD')**

In order to advance to candidacy (i.e. become 'ABD'), doctoral students must (a) complete all required coursework; (b) successfully defend her or his dissertation proposal; and (c) pass his or her qualifying exams (including both written and oral portions). Students may choose the order of the proposal defense and qualifying exams, in conjunction with their advisors and advisory committees. Some students prefer to take their exams prior to defending the proposal while others prefer to defend their proposal before taking the exams. The order of the exams and defense should be decided by the beginning of the student's second year in the PhD program (preferably during the student's second annual review meeting as a PhD student).

### **C. Dissertation Proposal**

PhD students are required to prepare a dissertation proposal, which must be approved in a formal proposal defense with the student's advisory committee. The advisory committee consists of at least three members, including the student's advisor and two geography faculty members. One of these may be affiliated faculty (as listed on the department website). Additional committee members may participate at the discretion of the student and advisor. The proposal defense should be approximately two hours long. Following the defense, the student's advisor should write a memo communicating the results of the defense and place a copy of the memo, along with a copy of the approved dissertation proposal, in the student's Departmental file.

### **D. Ph.D. Qualifying Examination**

Qualifying exams may not be taken prior to the student's final semester of coursework (but may be taken after the student has completed all required coursework). A minimum of two weeks before the qualifying examination, the student should notify the Graduate Director of the examination, who will need to sign the student's Program of Study, which verifies that all course work requirements will have been met by the end of the semester in which the examination occurs.

**Purpose of the Qualifying Exams:** In general terms, qualifying exams are designed to evaluate the student's knowledge of (a) the scope, historical development, and current debates in the student's fields of interest; (b) the main theoretical and methodological approaches to the fields of interest; and (c) as appropriate, the specific techniques (e.g. specific statistical, qualitative, GIS, cartographic, language, or other skills) necessary to undertake and evaluate research in the fields of interest.

**Scope of the Exams:** In consultation with their advisors and advisory committees, students are required to develop three fields of competence. Fields of competence may be defined by AAG specialty groups, topics of graduate seminars or upper division courses, emerging areas of study,

methodology or theory. Students should select their fields of competence in consultation with their advisor and advisory committee.

Prior to taking the examination, students will work with their advisor and advisory committee to define and delimit their fields of competence. In consultation with their advisor and advisory committee, students will prepare detailed reading lists for each of their chosen fields. The reading lists should be comprehensive enough to capture the breadth and depth of a given field. During this process, the student and committee should establish the specific “ground rules” for the examination, so that both student and committee are clear on what is expected. Regular and ongoing communication between the student, advisor and committee members is thus vitally important.

**Exam Format and Timing:** The examination has both written and oral parts. For the written portion of the exam, a full day will typically be devoted to each field of competence; however, at the discretion of the Advisory Committee and student, the exam may be conducted in an un-timed manner. The written portion of the examination must be completed within four weeks. The format, expectations and standards for the exam’s final written product will be established in advance of the exam by the Advisor and Advisory Committee in consultation with the student.

Each member of the advisory committee should provide questions for qualifying examination to the student’s advisor. It is the responsibility of the advisor to coordinate with the student and advisory committee members, to select the final exam questions, and to administer the exam itself. To the extent possible, advisors should ensure that the student answers at least one question from each member of the committee.

The oral portion of the examination should be held two weeks after the written portion is completed. The oral examination normally lasts two hours and, like the written portion of the exam, will cover the three fields of competence.

The Qualifying exam is a departmental exam entirely and does not require representation from the Graduate School. The Student’s advisor serves as chair of the examination in all of its parts. Results of the Qualifying Exam must be reported by the advisor to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will report the outcome to the Graduate School.

Deviations from the established rules for the Qualifying Examination are permitted, but must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Graduate Committee.

### **E. Ph.D. Dissertation**

The doctoral dissertation should be an original scholarly contribution to the field of geography. It has no prescribed length and may be highly varied in methodology, topic, and style of presentation.

### **F. Dissertation Defense**

When the final draft of the dissertation has been approved by the advisor (and advisory committee members, as appropriate), an oral defense is scheduled. The Dissertation Examination Committee must include at least six members. As noted in Section V (‘Advisory System’), above, the dissertation examination committee includes the advisor and the four other committee members, at least one of whom must be from outside the department. In addition, the examination committee must include a representative of the Graduate School (a regular faculty member from another department at Syracuse University) who serves as chair of the examining committee. If a student has an affiliated faculty member on their advisory committee, they must add one additional core Geography member, and that affiliated faculty cannot act as the external committee member. Thus, the affiliated faculty would serve as the fourth optional “internal or external” slot of a six person committee with three core Geography and one external, and the chair representing the graduate school. All six members of the Examining Committee vote on the dissertation and its defense. Although additional members (beyond the required six) may be added to the examining



committee, under no circumstances may a majority of the examining committee be from outside the core Geography Faculty (affiliated faculty in other departments may serve on a student's advisory committee, but do not count as core faculty).

The oral defense is a public examination, to which members of the University community are invited. Because dissertation defenses are public events, the advisor should notify the department prior to the examination. The oral defense is usually two hours in length. While the exam will focus on the dissertation, examiners may ask questions concerning wider issues raised by the dissertation research. The chair of the examination committee will report the results of the defense to the Graduate School.

The defense is successful if the candidate obtains a simple majority of the voting members. Acceptance of the dissertation may be conditional upon the student adding to or modifying some of its parts. The advisor is responsible for ensuring that such conditions have been met before the dissertation is deposited in the Graduate School. Further information about preparing dissertations and theses can be found on the Graduate School website.

Each student completing the Ph.D. dissertation is considered at the time of their thesis/paper oral examination for the honor of graduating "with distinction." Distinction is reserved for students who demonstrate *superior* performances in both the oral examination and the dissertation. It requires a unanimous favorable vote from all members of the student's examining committee. The result—if positive—is reported by the Examination Chair to the student, the Graduate Director and the Graduate School.

Students should submit electronically a pdf version of their dissertation to the Graduate School (see instructions on graduate school website) and electronic copies to the Department (for binding and placement in the James Library) and the advisor if requested. The student should also provide interested committee members with a paper or electronic copy.

### **G. Time Frame and Continuity of Study**

Doctoral candidates must have their final dissertation draft approved within five years from the date of admission to candidacy, otherwise the candidate must apply for re-admission to the doctoral program and may be required to re-write the proposal and re-take the Qualifying exam. Further, five years post-ABD status, the graduate school will require matriculation through GRD 991. This is a one credit course so the student will incur the one-credit fee each semester to continue their status.

### **H. Minimum Basic Requirements for Satisfactory Progress**

To be considered for departmental funding, Ph.D. students in good standing must: 1) have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better, 2) not have two or more Incompletes over two semesters, 3) have performed adequately in their Teaching Assistant or other Graduate Assistant assignments, and 4) not have earned any grade C or lower in degree coursework, 5) by the beginning of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year must have a principal advisor. If no faculty member is willing to serve as a principal advisor, then the student must take a leave of absence until such time as a regular faculty member in the department agrees to advise. If a principal advisor is not secured within 2 years of the beginning of the leave of absence, then the student is required to withdraw from the program. Failure to meet any of these criteria shall constitute grounds for denial of funding. Such decisions are made on a case by case basis, and consideration is given to extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness or other personal considerations). Students whose funding has been discontinued for reasons of performance may request reconsideration.

### **VIII. WRITING AND SCHEDULING**

Scholarly writing demands careful use of language, and good writing takes a lot of time. Logical organization, lucid writing, and coherent, professionally acceptable graphics are the responsibility of the candidate. Candidates are encouraged to work on their writing to improve clarity and precision in their use of language.

Students should not expect their advisors or committee members to copy edit their work. Although the advisor will offer suggestions on wording, flow, and overall organization, the candidate should present a carefully written drafts that require only minimal editing. For both native and non-native English speaking students useful resources and advice can be sought at the Writing Center and the Graduate Editing Center.

The Advisor-approved final draft of the dissertation must be distributed to the Examining Committee at least two weeks before the defense. The student should not distribute draft until the advisor has approved doing so. Because of other demands on the faculty, the Examining Committee may, at its discretion, require a longer lead-time. It is recommended that students be prepared to submit the defense-ready draft of the dissertation to the full committee four weeks prior to the dissertation defense date. Because of faculty research and travel schedules, defenses are particularly difficult to schedule during summer. Students should therefore plan to defend either during (or very close to) Fall or Spring semesters, and always with full consultation of the advisor and committee members.

## IX GRADUATE CERTIFICATES IN SPECIAL STUDIES

En route to an M.A or Ph.D. degree, students have the opportunity to obtain Graduate Certificates of Advanced Study (CAS) in a variety of special studies following the completion of a required number of advanced courses (normally 12-15 hours). Some examples of CAS's include:

- Food Studies (Falk College)
- Geographic Information Systems (Maxwell)
- Conflict Resolution (PARC)
- Environmental Mediation (PARC)
- Information Studies and Telecommunications (IST)
- International Peace Studies (PARC)
- Latin American and Caribbean Studies (Maxwell)
- South Asian Studies (Maxwell)
- Women's and Gender Studies (Arts and Sciences)

There are many other Certificate of Advanced Studies in the Maxwell School and across the wider university. Credits for a CAS may or may not be counted towards the student's primary degree program depending on the following NYSED criteria:

*“Certificates of Advanced Study (C.A.S.) (excluding programs registered as preparing individuals for a teaching certificate, educational leadership certificate, or a professional license issued by the State Education Department). C.A.S. programs may be part of an existing degree program or a stand-alone program of study. In cases in which two or more C.A.S.s are to be earned by one student, the minimum number of credits earned by the student must be at least 80 percent of the combined total of SU credits required for each certificate. However, two 12-credit C.A.S.s may not be awarded for less than 21 credits. In cases where the C.A.S. curriculum is part of another degree program, and you are admitted to that other degree program, credit may be double counted for the C.A.S. and other degree, subject to the above restrictions.”*

(See the course catalog for a full discussion of all rules pertaining to counting credits)

## X DEPARTMENTAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The departmental office provides administrative services to the faculty and a range of services and supplies to students. Students are provided with a personal code to allow them to use the departmental photocopier. Students also have direct access to the Maxwell and university computer network via the university's wireless network. In addition, a cluster of desktop computers is available for TA use (i.e., all Maxwell TAs) in the TA area (Eggers Hall, ground floor). This cluster also provides access to Maxwell network services. The network provides word-processing and statistical software.

Listserv and Homepage: The department communicates among all its members via an electronic listserv ([GEO@listserv.syr.edu](mailto:GEO@listserv.syr.edu)). Graduates should check their Syracuse (@syr.edu) e-mail accounts on a regular basis as that is the medium of most university communication.

Web Site: The department's website can be found at <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/geo/>, on which students will find information regarding the department's programs, its faculty, staff, students, and courses.

Eggers 014, CH 222 and printing privileges: Students have access to both the Eggers Hall and Crouse Hinds computer labs when they are not being used for classes. In addition to computers, several printers and plotters are housed and are available use. The departmental cost of operating these is high, so students are requested to limit printing to black and white only, unless for use as conference presentations. Printing out multiple copies of theses and dissertations is prohibited. Usage rates are recorded and so any student found exceeding "reasonable use" will be charged for excessive printing.

Staff Cartographer: The Department presently has one staff cartographer whose principal duties are to prepare maps and graphics for faculty teaching, research and other needs. The staff cartographer is available to offer advice and technical assistance to graduate students, but will not prepare maps for students on university time. Students are urged to consult with the staff cartographer concerning any problems or questions that they might have regarding graphics.

The James Library: The department's Preston E. James Library (Eggers 152) contains a variety of books and reference materials, hard copies of selected journals (including the *Annals of the AAG*, *Economic Geography*, and the *Geographical Review*), and geography M.A. theses, M.A. papers, and Ph.D. dissertations. Library materials may not normally be taken from the James Library. The James Library is also commonly used as a gathering space where students can eat lunch, study, read and hang out. The Library is commonly used as a space for meetings (which take priority over other uses), so please be aware of scheduling and be courteous of other users.

Office Space: Study and work space for graduate students is provided in a variety of graduate rooms within Eggers Hall and Crouse-Hinds Hall. Priority for study space is generally given to Teaching Assistants, doctoral candidates, and students working on departmental and faculty projects. Doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy may wish to work in study carrels, available upon application in Bird Library.

Job Seeking: The department makes every effort to help students find professional positions as they near the completion of their graduate studies. Most commonly, the students' advisors will assume the main responsibility for advice and help, but students should feel free to call upon others. Faculty and advanced doctoral students often have copies of job letters, CV's, teaching and research statements and other materials that may be useful in preparing job applications.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **TRAVEL FUNDING GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

- A portion of the department's annual travel budget is set aside each year in support of graduate student conference travel.
- A graduate student must be on the program as a participant at a conference in order to qualify for travel funding.
- It is up to the graduate students to decide each year how the available funds should be divided/allocated. This involves collective decision-making about issues such as whether all conferences are "equal" in terms of worthiness, whether a student may be reimbursed for more than one conference/year, etc. The graduate students should resolve these questions as early in the academic year as possible, to accommodate those who may wish to participate in conferences in the Fall.
- Reimbursement from departmental funds can be requested solely for (reasonable) expenses for air fare/ground transportation, conference registration fees, hotel costs, and food.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **FUTURE PROFESSORIATE PROGRAM**

The Geography Department is an active participant in the university-wide Future Professoriate Program (FPP), which is designed to prepare graduate students for the demands of an academic career.

The FPP is one part of the Professional Development Programs of the Graduate School, and includes three primary elements:

- The Teaching Associateship, a higher-level pre-doctoral appointment involving an independent teaching experience under the guidance of a Faculty Teaching Mentor
- A series of Faculty Teaching Mentors' Seminars designed to assist faculty mentors in preparing graduate students for life in the academy
- The Certificate in University Teaching, a new form of recognition awarded jointly by the Graduate School and the academic departments to those teaching associates who, under the guidance of a faculty mentor, engage in an independent teaching experience and document their teaching credentials through the preparation of a teaching portfolio

## **APPENDIX III**

### **SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT DISABILITY**

#### **Academic Integrity**

The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. For graduate students, the presumed sanction for academic dishonesty of any sort is suspension or expulsion. All faculty working with graduate students are also expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Integrity policies and to report any concerns related to academic integrity as soon as a problem arises. Please see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>, for further information and the full academic policy statement.

#### **Students with Disabilities**

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 304 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498.

Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to course instructors and the Graduate Director, and review those accommodations with them within the first two weeks of each semester. Accommodations, such as exam administration or deadline extensions are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website:

<http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>